

The California Clam Shell Scrip Currency of 1933: Crescent City and Pismo Beach's anomaly in an era of Banknote Scrip

Author:
Joshua Smith
January 5, 2020



Acknowledgments

The research for this project was financial supported by the Eric P. Newman Numismatic Education Society and I gratefully thank them for their continued support of numismatic research, education and scholarship, without them this project would not have been possible.

I sincerely thank the historians, authors, staff and residents of Crescent City and Pismo Beach who provided invaluable support in the success of this project. A special thank you to Crescent City/Del Norte Chamber of Commerce, The Del Norte County Historical Society, the staff of the Del Norte County History Museum, David Middlecamp of The Tribune, the San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, Joel Anderson World Coins, Games Exchange, the History Center of San Luis Obispo, and the staff of the Pismo Beach City Hall for sharing the history of Crescent City and Pismo Beach. Through these individuals and organizations, I was provided access to the preserved history from which this research draws its conclusions. Their knowledge and openness to share the history of Crescent City and Pismo Beach is what has guaranteed the continued survival of the Clam Shell Scrip.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments

1	Introduction.....	1
2	History.....	3
	Pre-Colonial Clam Shell Currency.....	3
	President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Banking Holiday of 1933.....	6
3	Origin and Adoption of the Clam Shell Scrip.....	9
	The Crescent City Narrative.....	9
	The Pismo Beach Narrative.....	12
	The Clam Shell Scrip in the News.....	15
	The Creators and Their Clam Shell Scrip.....	16
	The Authors of the Modern Historical Narrative.....	17
4	Fieldwork and Date Differentiation of the Clam Shell Scrip.....	19
	Fieldwork in Crescent City and Pismo Beach.....	19
	Date Differentiation and Signs of Backdating.....	22
5	The 80th Anniversary Series of 2013.....	27
	A Return to Public Use.....	27
	Design and Production of the Series.....	27
	A Modern Perspective on the Clam Shell Scrip.....	31
6	Conclusion.....	36
	Conclusion for the Clam Shell Scrip... ..	36

Bibliography

1 Introduction

The California Clam Shell Scrip of 1933 is one of the most unique forms of scrip currency – a substitute for legal tender, often issued as credit in the form of paper currency or tokens – to arise during the Great Depression.¹ Originating in Crescent City and Pismo Beach simultaneously during the Bank Holiday of 1933, this scrip currency was produced by local merchants to combat the lack of cash available during the U.S. financial institutions' hiatus. Today it is uncertain how many merchants issued Clam Shell Scrip or how the impromptu currency came into existence. Several pieces of this currency have been cataloged in various museums, yet no research has considered the origins of the Clam Shell Scrip, nor the process by which the residents of Crescent City and Pismo Beach produced and distributed this scrip currency. To this end, fieldwork and archival searches were conducted in both Crescent City and Pismo Beach, California. The two objectives of this research were first, to aid in understanding the historical narrative that led to the currency's creation and adoption and second, to document and digitally record the Clam Shell Scrip currently remaining before it is lost to time.

Fieldwork conducted in Crescent City revealed that the city no longer retains collections, written records nor oral history of the Clam Shell Scrip, despite its mass use. The scrip currency's historical narrative has been preserved only in the writings of modern authorities. These narratives recount how L. G. Westfall, Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, brought forth the idea to adopt the practice once common among early settlers, of using the Clam Shell as a form of

¹ The Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. "scrip (n.)," accessed January 3, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/scrip>.

currency. The scope of the research for Crescent City was to review the two remaining historical narratives and to identify any remaining physical evidence of the city's 1933 Clam Shell Scrip. A single piece of Clam Shell Scrip has survived and was sold at auction through Holabird-Kagin Americana in 2012, which provides evidence that the merchants of Crescent City adopted L. G. Westfall's idea. Together, the merchants and the Chamber of Commerce produced a Clam Shell Scrip that successfully supported local commerce until the Bank Holiday of 1933 ended.

The fieldwork conducted in Pismo Beach revealed that the city retains an historical collection at Pismo Beach City Hall and its story has been retold in local newspapers and museums for almost a century. From these stories, there exists a prevalent narrative of how three local merchants by the names of William H. Bogue, K. L. Phillips and Harry H. Leiter came together and created the Clam Shell Scrip of Pismo Beach. The scope of the research for Pismo Beach was to review the written, oral and physical evidence surrounding the scrip currency's adoption in order to authenticate the current origin story, first found in the California State Numismatic Association's periodical Calcoin News from May of 1959. Nineteen pieces of the 1933 Clam Shell Scrip have survived and are on display, which provides support to the prevailing origin story, as well as, suggests an interconnected design and production process between merchants. In 2013, to mark the 80th anniversary of the scrip currency, local merchants reissued a replica of the 1933 Clam Shell Scrip to commemorate the ingenuity of the city's former merchants. These replicas have found popularity with locals and tourists, thus preserving the scrip currency.

2 History of the Clam Shell Scrip

Pre-Colonial Clam Shell Currency

Crescent City's pre-colonial history is found among the Native American Tolowa (Taa-laa-wa Dee-ni'), whose ancestral land or *Taa-laa-waa dvn* lies within modern day Curry, Josephine and Del Norte Counties surrounding the Smith River basin.² The Tolowa did not use the clam shell as a medium of exchange, but rather adopted Dentalium shells, known as *tr'vt*, that served as a medium of exchange for the region.³ Dentalium are a tusk like seashell that encases scaphoid mollusks that are native to the North Pacific Coast.⁴ Dentalium shells provided a quantifiable statement of wealth, due to the existence of different methods to measure its value. The Tolowa's neighbors to the north used a method whereby ten Dentalium shells were strung together and the total length determined their value.⁵ The *Yurok*, who lived to the south along the Klamath River, used a set length of string where the number of Dentalium shells upon it determined its value.⁶ This ascertained value in trade was payment for services or in the settlement of disputes.⁷ However, Dentalium shells diverge from modern currencies in that its primary purpose was for use as a statement of wealth. The possession of Dentalium shells were closely associated with a

² Loren Me'-lash-ne Bommelyn, "Who We Are – Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation," published March, 2011, <https://www.tolowa-nsn.gov/who-we-are/>.

³ Loren Me'-lash-ne Bommelyn, "Who We Are – Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation," published March, 2011, <https://www.tolowa-nsn.gov/who-we-are/>.

⁴ "Alutiiq Word of the Week Archive – Clothing – Dentalium Shell," Alutiiq Museum, Accessed January 4, 2020, <https://alutiiqmuseum.org/word-of-the-week-archive/750-dentalium-shell-1>.

⁵ Philip Drucker, "The Tolowa and Their Southwest Oregon Kin," *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology* 36, no. 4 (1937): 240, accessed January 4, 2020, <https://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/anthpubs/ucb/text/ucp036-005.pdf>.

⁶ Philip Drucker, "The Tolowa and Their Southwest Oregon Kin," *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology* 36, no. 4 (1937): 240, accessed January 4, 2020, <https://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/anthpubs/ucb/text/ucp036-005.pdf>.

⁷ Philip Drucker, "The Tolowa and Their Southwest Oregon Kin," *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology* 36, no. 4 (1937): 240, accessed January 4, 2020, <https://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/anthpubs/ucb/text/ucp036-005.pdf>.

family's status and was passed from generation to generation.⁸ The Tolowa never turned to clam shells as a medium of exchange, nonetheless they took part in a vibrant regional trading network that included a recognizable symbol of wealth and status.

Pismo Beach holds a long history both ethnographically and economically. The pre-colonial California seaboard was home to a collective of several interrelated Native American tribes commonly known as the Chumash. Their territory was within the boundaries of the San Joaquin Valley, Paso Robles and Malibu, inclusive of the California Channel Islands.⁹ The names Pismo Beach and Pismo Clam originate from the Chumash word *pismu*, a term for tar found in Prince Canyon just north of Pismo Beach.¹⁰ This tar was used as caulking for the Chumash's Tomol, their deep-water canoes, which were used to access the California Channel Islands, a geological location for Chert used in drills and a natural habitat of the Pismo Clam.¹¹

The Chumash were one of the most advanced Native American peoples in terms of both commerce and a working monetary system. The Chumash had a history of using the Pismo Clam to create an early, bead shaped, currency known as Achum. While scholars still debate whether Achum can be defined as a true form of currency, it meets many of the characteristics necessary. As a medium of exchange, Achum was a durable, portable and quantifiable piece of clam shell,

⁸ Philip Drucker, "The Tolowa and Their Southwest Oregon Kin," *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology* 36, no. 4 (1937): 240, accessed January 4, 2020, <https://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/anthpubs/ucb/text/ucp036-005.pdf>.

⁹ Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, "History of the Chumash People," accessed January 3, 2020, <https://www.santaynezchumash.org/history.html>

¹⁰ Sandy Nestor, *Indian Placenames in America, Volume 1* (North Carolina: McFarland, 2015), 33.

¹¹ California Coastal Commission, *Beaches and Parks from Monterey to Ventura* (California: University of California Press, 2007), 234.

that was rounded and polished with a hole drilled in the center.¹² Achum was utilized in trade, payments for labor and services, and as a quantifiable statement of wealth.¹³ This quantifiability is what elevates Achum away from a medium of exchange and allowed it to be used as an accepted currency by other tribes. Its use in inter-tribal trade was noted by researcher Arthur Woodward during his fieldwork in California:

“The Indians of Tulare country generally came over once a year in bands... They brought over Panoche, or a thick sugar, made from what we now call honey dew, and the sweet carisa cane, and put it into small onlong sacks made of grass and swamp flags: also pine nuts and wild tobacco pounded and mixed with lime... These articles were exchanged for a species of money from the Indian mint of the Santa Barbara rancherias, called by them panga. This description of money consisted of pieces of rounded shells... which were brought by the Barbarians from the Island of Santa Rosa. The worth of a rial [real] was put on a string which was passed twice and a half around the hand, i.e. from the end of the middle finger to the wrist. Eight of these strings passed for the value of a silver dollar, and the Indians always preferred them to silver.”¹⁴

As noted in his account, there was a distinctive method for assessing the value, or amount, of Achum, as well as, a preference by other Native American groups for the clam shell currency. However, there is another aspect, mentioned in Woodward’s account, that sets Achum apart as a currency. Specifically, that the Chumash had a mint located on the California Channel Islands.

¹² Marjorie H. Akin, James C. Bard and Kevin Akin, *Numismatic Archaeology of North America: A Field Guide* (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2016), 36.

¹³ Marjorie H. Akin, James C. Bard and Kevin Akin, *Numismatic Archaeology of North America: A Field Guide* (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2016), 36.

¹⁴ Arthur Woodward, “An Early Account of the Chumash,” *The Masterkey*, VIII, (July 1934): 119.

This allowed the Chumash, who were the only people with Tomols, a method of controlled production. Therefore, the Channel Islands acted as a natural deterrent of counterfeiting and reduced the possibility of inflation as only an elite group of craftsmen had access to the island mint. The Chumash's achievements included the creation of minting, inflation control and anti-counterfeiting methods that are comparable to contemporary practices. Their economic success was no secret as many others, such as Spanish envoy Jose Longinos Matinez, would record the Chumash's prowess in commerce and their established monetary system.¹⁵ Through its role as the foundational material for Achum and its continued use as a local food source, the Pismo Clam developed a symbolic nature with Pismo Beach's inhabitants, local businesses, tourists and even communal government; a status that provides the tongue in cheek idiom for the Pismo Beach Clam Shell Scrip of 1933.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Banking Holiday of 1933

The event that triggered the creation of the Clam Shell Scrip can be traced back to the Spring of 1933 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt was sworn into office on March 4th of that year. President Roosevelt brought with him promises to restore the national economy and rebuild the nation's confidence in their banking system, but most importantly he promised action.¹⁶ True to his word on March 6th, 1933 President Roosevelt issued Proclamation 2039, announcing the suspension of all banking institutions from March 6th to March 9th inclusive. The following

¹⁵ Marjorie H. Akin, James C. Bard and Kevin Akin, *Numismatic Archaeology of North America: A Field Guide*, (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2016), 38.

¹⁶ William L. Silber, "Why Did FDR's Bank Holiday Succeed?," *Economic Policy Review* 15, no. 1 (July 2009): 2, accessed January 3, 2020, <https://www.newyorkfed.org/research/epr/09v15n1/0907silb.html>

excerpt from Proclamation 2039 details the services, which banking institutions were no longer allowed to provide during the holiday.

“Now, Therefore I, Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States of America, in view of such national emergency and by virtue of the authority vested in me by said Act and in order to prevent the export, hoarding, or earmarking of gold or silver coin or bullion or currency, do hereby proclaim, order, direct and declare that from Monday, the Sixth day of March, to Thursday, the Ninth day of March, Nineteen Hundred and Thirty-three, both dates inclusive, there shall be maintained and observed by all banking institutions and all branches thereof located in the United States of America, including the territories and insular possessions, a bank holiday, and that during said period all banking transactions shall be suspended. During such holiday, excepting as hereinafter provided, no such banking institution or branch shall pay out, export, earmark, or permit the withdrawal or transfer in any manner or by any device whatsoever, of any gold or silver coin or bullion or currency or take any other action which might facilitate the hoarding thereof; nor shall any such banking institution or branch pay out deposits, make loans or discounts, deal in foreign exchange, transfer credits from the United States to any place abroad, or transact any other banking business whatsoever.” – Franklin D. Roosevelt, Proclamation 2039¹⁷

The suspension of all banking transactions would continue for longer than the allotted 3 days, and it would not be until March 13th that American citizens were able to access banking services

¹⁷ Gerhard Peters and John T. Wooley, “Proclamation 2039-Declaring Bank Holiday,” The American Presidency Project, Accessed January 3, 2020, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/proclamation-2039-declaring-bank-holiday>

once again.¹⁸ Proclamation 2039 prevented citizens from prolonging the run on American banks and allowed Congress time to reorganize the Federal Reserve and create the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC).¹⁹ However, this came at a cost; Americans and small businesses were unable to access regular banking services nor obtain cash for daily transactions. In a credit averse economy, this meant small businesses, civil services and the general public were without a method of payment, especially for daily purchases.

¹⁸ Ranjit S. Dighe, "Saving Private Capitalism: The U.S. Bank Holiday of 1933," *Essays in Economics & Business History* 29, (2011): 42, accessed January 3, 2020, <http://www.ebhsoc.org/journal/index.php/journal/article/view/40/37>

¹⁹ Federal Reserve History, "Banking Act of 1935," The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Last Modified November 22, 2013, https://www.federalreservehistory.org/essays/banking_act_of_1935

3 Origin and Adoption of the Clam Shell Scrip

The Crescent City Narrative

Inaccessibility to cash would lead merchants across the United States to develop their own forms of scrip currency during the Bank Holiday of 1933. The account of Crescent City's Clam Shell Scrip first appears in the California State Numismatic Association's *Calcoin News* Vo. 12, No. 6 published in November of 1958. The authors, Ralph A. Mitchell and Charles V. Kappan, outline a narrative as to how local merchants began using clams as a form of scrip currency, through the inspiration of L. G. Westfall, Chamber of Commerce Secretary.²⁰

“Commenting on the use of clamshells as a medium of exchange, L. G. Westfall, then Chamber of Commerce secretary, quoted an eighteenth century banker in western Pennsylvania to the effect that early California settlers of 80 to 90 years before had used clamshells as money. Another medium used by Californians, according to the banker, was the top half of the bill and the red topknot of the large black and white woodpecker. These latter were sewed firmly onto little pieces of cloth, 4, 6 or 8 to a cloth, each head sewed on being valued at 25 cents. “Although outsiders may have considered the idea of use of the shells for money rather crude, the Crescent City citizens looked upon the breakdown of their banking system as such,” secretary Westfall said. When their banks closed and their money was withheld from them, Crescent City citizens merely turned to a symbol of values which had proved successful in days gone by. Clamshell money was used locally only, for paying ranchers for their produces and for other purposes. Use of small checks was unsatisfactory, owing to a 2-cent tax on each check. Westfall referred to the

²⁰ Ralph A. Mitchell and Charles V. Kappan, “United States Depression Scrip,” *Calcoin News* 12, no. 6 (1958): 134-135, accessed January 3, 2020. https://archive.org/details/calcoinnews12n0cali_t6w7/page/134

shells as “our very liquid currency”. Used only while the banks were closed, all shells presented were redeemed when the banks opened again.”²¹

The authors provide a description of the Clam Shell Scrip’s physical appearance, as well as, an estimate of the total value issued during the Bank Holiday of 1933.

“Scrip Currency at Crescent City was in the form of natural, unpolished clamshells. The rough outside surface bore no writing. Inside, issuer, date, denomination and signature were typewritten on Paper, which was pasted on the shell. On some specimens, this information was entered in ink, directly on the shell. No provision was made for endorsements. Markings or inscriptions on these shells also stated that they would be redeemed by the individual or organization issuing them, upon presentation at a designed place. Redemption limit was six months. A total of \$1000 in clamshell scrip was issued, principally in 10-cent and 25-cent denominations, although some 50-cent scrip was placed in circulation.”²²

At a total value of \$1,000 with denominations primary of \$0.10 and \$0.25 the Crescent City Clam Shell Scrip’s production, if split 50/50 between denominations, could have reached a total of 7,000 issues.

A comparable account appears in the July 1993 issue of *Winning Ways: Official Publication of Women in Numismatics*. However, the 1993 *Winning Ways* article estimates that, “*Between*

²¹ Ralph A. Mitchell and Charles V. Kappan, “United States Depression Scrip,” *Calcoin News* 12, no. 6 (1958): 134-135, accessed January 3, 2020. https://archive.org/details/calcoinnews12n0cali_t6w7/page/134

²² Ralph A. Mitchell and Charles V. Kappan, “United States Depression Scrip,” *Calcoin News* 12, no. 6 (1958): 134-135, accessed January 3, 2020. https://archive.org/details/calcoinnews12n0cali_t6w7/page/134

\$1200 and \$1500 in clamshell scrip was issued altogether.”²³ Given the 1958 Calcoin News article’s assertion that the scrip currency was issued “...*principally in 10-cent and 25-cent denominations*”, this new estimate suggests roughly 2,000 additional issues of Clam Shell Scrip, bringing it to a total of 9,000 issues.²⁴ Apart from this deviation in the total value of the Clam Shell Scrip, the two narratives are almost identical. In the 1993 Winning Ways article, the author describes the Clam Shell Scrip’s use as “...*only locally, for paying ranchers for their produce and similar purposes. (The use of regular checks was considered unsatisfactory due to a 2-cent tax on each check.)*”, which closely duplicates the 1959 article “*Clamshell money was used locally only, for paying ranchers for their produces and for other purposes. Use of small checks was unsatisfactory, owing to a 2-cent tax on each check.*”²⁵ Therefore, the 1993 Winning Ways article likely sourced its narrative from Ralph A. Mitchell and Charles V. Kappan’s 1958 publication in Calcoin News.

Credibility is lent to the fact that merchants of Crescent City issued Clam Shell Scrip in 1933, through a modern secondary source; the auction catalog for Holabird-Kagin Americana Western States Token Auction held in March of 2012. Holabird-Kagin Americana was a division of Kagin’s Inc., which is the official auctioneer for many of the American Numismatic Association’s national conventions. In the 2012 auction, Lot 410 was a Crescent City Clam Shell

²³ Robert D. Leonard Jr., “California Clamshell Money,” *Winning Ways: Official Publication of Women in Numismatics* 2, No. 3 (1993): 11, <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/514901?page=15>.

²⁴ Ralph A. Mitchell and Charles V. Kappan, “United States Depression Scrip,” *Calcoin News* 12, no. 6 (1958): 134-135, accessed January 3, 2020. https://archive.org/details/calcoinnews12n0cali_t6w7/page/134

²⁵ Ralph A. Mitchell and Charles V. Kappan, “United States Depression Scrip,” *Calcoin News* 12, no. 6 (1958): 134-135, accessed January 3, 2020. https://archive.org/details/calcoinnews12n0cali_t6w7/page/134; Robert D. Leonard Jr., “California Clamshell Money,” *Winning Ways: Official Publication of Women in Numismatics* 2, No. 3 (1993): 11, <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/514901?page=15>.

Scrip dated March 10th, 1933.²⁶ The Clam Shell Scrip was issued by Alakchik, a local garage in Crescent City, and signed by Ray Adsit and C.W. Nohl.²⁷ Holabird-Kagin Americana's auction catalog states that "*The U.S. Federal Census for Crescent City for 1930 lists Ray Adsit as a garage proprietor and Charles Nohl as an automotive repair clerk.*"²⁸ Given that this piece of Clam Shell Scrip is inscribed on the soft inside surface, dated to March 10, 1933, signed by two Crescent City business partners and authenticated by a nationally respected auction house, its authenticity is difficult to dispute.

The narratives from the 1958 and 1993 articles indicate a substantial supply of Clam Shell Scrip through the Chamber of Commerce and Crescent City merchants' potential issuance of 9,000 pieces and the use of the scrip currency by large ranchers in the region. Therefore, it is surprising that historical documentation, regional museums and local historians have not preserved any Crescent City Clam Shell Scrip currency nor remember its existence

The Pismo Beach Narrative

The following year in 1959 Mitchell and Kappan also authored an account of the Pismo Beach Clam Shell Scrip, which was published in the California State Numismatic Association's periodical *Calcoin News*, Vol. 13, No. 3, on May 5th, 1959. This account is the earliest narrative to name Bogue, Leiter, Phillips as the creators of the Pismo Beach Clam Shell Scrip currency.

²⁶ Wayne Homren, "Holabird-Kagin Americana Western States Token Auction March 2012," *The E-Sylum* 15, no. 13 (2012): Article 16, <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/periodical/14296>.

²⁷ Wayne Homren, "Holabird-Kagin Americana Western States Token Auction March 2012," *The E-Sylum* 15, no. 13 (2012): Article 16, <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/periodical/14296>

²⁸ Wayne Homren, "Holabird-Kagin Americana Western States Token Auction March 2012," *The E-Sylum* 15, no. 13 (2012): Article 16, <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/periodical/14296>

“On Monday morning, March 6, 1933, when all the banks were closed by Presidential decree, William H. Bogue, who operated a cigar store across the street from K. L. Phillips’ service station, tried to buy a roll of nickels for change from Phillips. Phillips, who had none to spare, laughingly said, ‘Oh, well, don’t worry, we can always use clamshells for money until the banks open.’ Bogue went next door to Leiter’s Pharmacy, where he had Harry Leiter help him make a piece of clam-shell scrip in \$1 denomination. He then took it to Phillips, who signed it and place it in his store window. A customer saw it and paid Philips \$1 for it. Starting on Monday, by noon of the next day he had four unemployed citizens busy polishing, ornamenting, numbering and dating clamshells.”²⁹

An almost duplicate account appears in the July 1993 issue of *Winning Ways: Official Publication of Women in Numismatics*.

“On Monday morning, March 6, William H. Bogue, who operated a cigar store across the street from K. L. Phillips’s service station, tried to buy a roll of nickels from Phillips for change. Phillips had none to spare and laughingly said, ‘Oh, well, don’t worry, we can always use clamshells for money until the banks open’. Bogue then went next door to Leiter’s Pharmacy, where he had Harry H. Leiter help him make a piece of clamshell scrip sort of as a joke-though he made the denomination \$1, not 5 cents.

Bogue then took the clamshell over to Phillips, who—being a good sport—signed it and put it in his store window. A customer saw it and paid Phillips \$1 for it. This gave Leiter the idea of

²⁹ Ralph A. Mitchell and Charles V. Kappan, “United States Depression Scrip,” *Calcoin News* 13, no. 3 (1959): 65, accessed January 3, 2020. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/516388?page=7>

Actually using the clamshell scrip for money. Starting that day, by noon Tuesday he had four unemployed workers busy polishing, ornamenting, numbering, and dating clamshells.”³⁰

The ending sentence of the 1959 story “*Starting on Monday, by noon of the next day he had four unemployed citizens busy polishing, ornamenting, numbering and dating clamshells.*” is almost directly quoted in the 1993 rendition, with the replacement of the word “Monday” for the less specific “that day” to read as “*Starting that day, by noon Tuesday he had four unemployed workers busy polishing, ornamenting, numbering, and dating clamshells.*”³¹ The similar format of both accounts, almost perfect duplication of sentences and identical phrasing by K. L. Phillips indicants that the 1993 rendition primarily, if not solely, sourced its information from the 1959 article.

What is most important however, is how reliable these two accounts of the Clam Shell Scrip’s origins are for use as historical narratives. Currently, there are only two primary sources remaining to directly test these accounts. The first is several newspaper columns, published by the San Luis Obispo Daily Telegram on March 7th and 8th, 1933 announcing how several merchants in Pismo Beach had suddenly started using clam shells as money. The second is the Clam Shell Scrip from 1933 held in the Pismo Beach City Hall and the Smithsonian’s National Numismatic Collection.

³⁰ Robert D. Leonard Jr., “California Clamshell Money,” *Winning Ways: Official Publication of Women in Numismatics* 2, No. 3 (1993): 11, <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/514901?page=15>.

³¹ Ralph A. Mitchell and Charles V. Kappan, “United States Depression Scrip,” *Calcoin News* 13, no. 3 (1959): 65, accessed January 3, 2020. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/516388?page=7>; Robert D. Leonard Jr., “California Clamshell Money,” *Winning Ways: Official Publication of Women in Numismatics* 2, No. 3 (1993): 11, <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/514901?page=15>.

The Clam Shell Scrip in the News

The San Luis Obispo Daily

Telegram's column aids in assessing the credibility of the 1959 Calcoin

News narrative by providing a list of merchants who issued Clam Shell

Scrip prior to the day the column was published. The March 8th, 1933

column (see figure 1) from the San

Luis Obispo Daily Telegram

describes the merchants' idea of

discarding the traditional I. O. U. for "...their famous clam shells as a medium of exchange...".³²

At the bottom of the short column are the names of merchants who had by that time issued Clam Shell Scrip, with the promise of redeeming them for cash when the banks reopened. The

merchants listed in this column are: "California Market, Leiter Pharmacy, Bogue's Barber Shop, Pomeroy Electric, the Beach Store and Adams Court."³³ Bogue's Barber Shop was another

establishment owned by William H. Bogue that issued scrip currency during the bank holiday.

Of the three original creators of the scrip currency, William H. Bogue and Harry H. Leiter were the first to put their idea into practice with Bogue's \$1 denominated scrip currency, that was sold in K. L. Phillips' store according to the narrative in the 1959 Calcoin News article. All of the

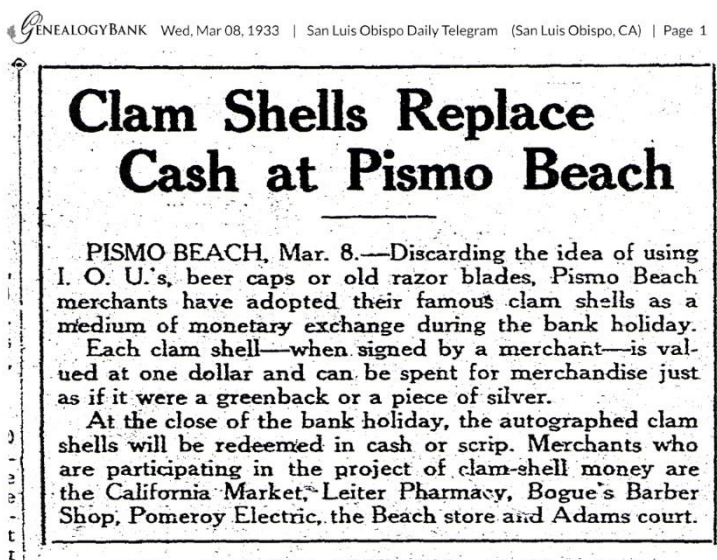


Figure 1 – San Luis Obispo Daily Telegram – History Center of San Luis Obispo Country

³² Photo courtesy of the San Luis Obispo County Historical Society; "Clam Shells Replace Cash as Pismo Beach," *San Luis Obispo Daily Telegram* (San Luis Obispo, California), Mar. 8, 1933.

³³ "Clam Shells Replace Cash as Pismo Beach," *San Luis Obispo Daily Telegram* (San Luis Obispo, California), Mar. 8, 1933.

merchants, including Bogue and Leiter would have had to issue scrip before or on March 7th, 1933 in order for their names to appear in the March 8th, 1933 edition of the San Luis Obispo Daily Telegram, providing support to the narrative that they were creators or early adopters of the Clam Shell Scrip.

The Creators and Their Clam Shell Scrip

Supporting the narrative that Harry H. Leiter was one of the original issuers is the physical evidence of the surviving 1933 Clam Shell Scrip. Specifically, Leiter's \$1 denominated Clam Shell Scrip bearing Serial Number "No. 1" (See Figure 2) which is dated March 6th, 1933 and is displayed in the Pismo Beach City Hall's Collection.³⁴

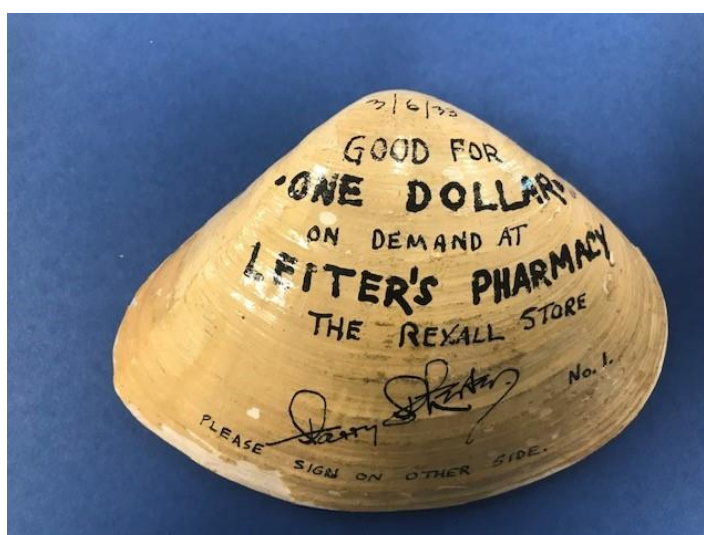


Figure 2 - Leiter's Pharmacy \$1, No.1 - Pismo Beach City Hall Collection

Assuming that the merchants did not backdate their scrip currency, Harry Leiter's first issue of Clam Shell Scrip would have been on March 6th, 1933 the same day as the scrip currency's creation, according to the 1959 Calcoin News narrative. Pismo Beach City Hall's Collection contains 11 specimens of Clam Shell Scrip dated March 6th, 1933 and represents the following merchants: Beach Camp, Beach Store, California Market, Chamber of Commerce and Henderson's Drug Store. Two of the merchants were identified in the March 8th, 1933 column from the San Luis Obispo Daily Telegram, which provides evidence that the Clam Shell Scrip

³⁴ Photo courtesy of the Pismo Beach City Hall

was issued on or before March 7th, 1933. The Chamber of Commerce Clam Shell Scrip was endorsed with the signatures of Harry H. Leiter and William H. Bogue, indicating both men were involved with the scrip currency on March 6th, 1933. Meanwhile, Harry H. Leiter was also creating Clam Shell Scrip for his own establishment dated March 6th, 1933 and issued on or before March 7th, 1933 allowing for its appearance in the San Luis Obispo Daily Telegram column on March 8th, 1933.

The Authors of the Modern Historical Narrative

Beyond the two remaining primary sources; the March 8th, 1933 San Luis Obispo Daily Telegram column and the Pismo Beach City Hall Collection, the authorship and date of publication of the 1959 Calcoin News article reinforces the accuracy of the Clam Shell Scrip's true historical narrative. The authors of the 1959 Calcoin News article were Ralph A. Mitchell and Charles V. Kappen. The former, Ralph A. Mitchell was a well-known numismatist who held a deep fascination for depression scrip currency, leading to his catalog "Standard Catalog of Depression Scrip of the United States" in collaboration with numismatist Neil Shafer.³⁵ Mitchell was also an early proponent for the creation of numismatic societies in California during the 1930s. Due to Mitchell's continued involvement in numismatics, he later served from 1939 to 1943 as District Secretary for the American Numismatic Association, America's national numismatic society.³⁶ In 1947, Mitchell helped found the California State Numismatic Association, the very organization that issued his article in 1959. When it came to Depression

³⁵ "'Historic era' nominees inducted into ANA Numismatic Hall of Fame," *Canadian Coin News*, June 18, 2016, <https://canadiancoinnews.com/historic-era-nominees-inducted-into-ana-numismatic-hall-of-fame/>

³⁶ "'Historic era' nominees inducted into ANA Numismatic Hall of Fame," *Canadian Coin News*, June 18, 2016, <https://canadiancoinnews.com/historic-era-nominees-inducted-into-ana-numismatic-hall-of-fame/>

Scrip, Mitchell was an authority on the subject and had easy geographical access to the city of Pismo Beach and its numismatic history. Furthermore, given the date of publication in 1959, the article's authors would have had the ability to source their narrative directly from the original Pismo Beach merchants, as obituary records indicate K. L. Phillips passed in San Luis Obispo in September of 1970 and Harry H. Leiter passed in San Jose in 1974.³⁷ While there is no indication of collaboration between the article's authors and the Pismo Beach merchants, there is no evidence to the contrary. Therefore, as a pioneer of numismatics in California and an authority on depression era scrip, Mitchell's authorship provides credibility to the narrative of the 1959 Calcoin News article.

³⁷ Oliver Bryk, "Kerwin Louis Phillips (1892 – 1970) – Genealogy," last modified December 3, 2016, <https://www.geni.com/people/Kerwin-Phillips/6000000018856623004>.; Chuck Schubert, "Harry H. Leiter (1905-1974) – Find A Grave Memorial," last modified May 16, 2018, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/189798203/harry-h_-leiter.

4 Fieldwork and Date Differentiation of the Clam Shell Scrip.

Fieldwork in Crescent City and Pismo Beach.

In order to assemble the historical records and images used throughout this research, fieldwork was undertaken in September of 2019 to collect documentation, artifacts and new evidence, from both Crescent City and Pismo Beach. This resulted in 4 days of fieldwork in Crescent City and another 4 days in Pismo Beach. Time was spent meeting with local historians, searching archives and museums, and examining the Clam Shell Scrip currency held at the Pismo Beach City Hall Collection.

The four days of fieldwork in Crescent City revealed there were no remaining primary sources in the city; neither physical nor written and that local historians were no longer aware of the Clam Shell Scrip currency. The fieldwork in Crescent City included visits to the Crescent City/Del Norte Chamber of Commerce and Del Norte County History Museum, meeting with staff of the Del Norte County Historical Society and correspondence with historians, Native American elders and the Arts and Humanities Division at College of the Redwoods. Through this fieldwork, it was clear that any remaining verifiable evidence of the Crescent City Clam Shell Scrip currency was limited to one physical primary source and two written secondary sources. The physical primary source being the Alakchik \$0.10 Clam Shell Scrip sold by Holabird-Kagin Americana, while the two written secondary sources were the 1958 Calcoin News article by authors Ralph A. Mitchell and Charles V. Kappen and the 1993 Winning Ways article by author Robert D. Leonard Jr.

The fieldwork in Pismo Beach included; visits to the Pismo Beach City Hall and the San Luis Obispo County Museum, interviews with the creator and issuing merchants of the 80th Anniversary Series, and correspondence with historians, journalists and the San Luis Obispo Museum of Art. Pismo Beach possessed extensive records and evidence pertaining to the Pismo Beach Clam Shell Scrip, including a collection of 19 pieces in the Pismo Beach City Hall, archives containing newspapers and articles from 1933, and historians fully knowledgeable of the city's scrip currency. The fieldwork in Pismo Beach provided a new opportunity to complete the first documentation and digital record of the Pismo Beach City Hall Collection, with the support of the Pismo Beach City Hall Staff. The documented Collection holds 19 Clam Shells dated between March 6th and March 10th of 1933, which are itemized below in Table 1.

Table 1: 19 remaining pieces of Clam Shell Scrip – Pismo Beach City Hall Collection

Issuer	Date (DD.MM.YYY)	Denomination	Serial No.	Obverse Signed By:
Beach Camp	06.03.1933	\$1	No #	Theodore Bernhoeft
California MKT	06.03.1933	\$1	4	C.F. Earman, W.M. Houser
California MKT.	06.03.1933	\$0.25	8	C.F. Earman, W.M. Houser
Chamber of Commerce	06.03.1933	\$0.50	No #	Theodore Bernhoeft, Harry H. Leiter, William Vutunois
F.W. Wolverton Signs	06.03.1933	\$20	No #	F.W. Wolverton
Harter Drug Co.	08.03.1933	\$1	7	C.P. Harter
Harter Drug Co.	08.03.1933	\$0.50	9	C.P. Harter
Henderson's Drug	06.03.1933	\$0.25	12	O.L. Henderson
Henderson's Drug	06.03.1933	\$0.50	14	O.L. Henderson
Henderson's Drug	06.03.1933	\$1	18	O.L. Henderson
Hi-way Cigar Store	08.03.1933	\$1	10	William H. Bogue
Hi-way Cigar Store	08.03.1933	\$0.25	12	William H. Bogue
Leiter's Pharmacy	06.03.1913	\$1	1	Harry H. Leiter
Leiter's Pharmacy	10.03.1933	\$1	15	Harry H. Leiter
Leiter's Pharmacy	08.03.1933	\$5	69	Harry H. Leiter
Pomeroy Electric	10.03.1933	\$1	6	H.C. Stoll
Restwell Cabins	08.03.1933	\$0.50	4A	Charles V. Williamson
The Beach Store	06.03.1933	\$0.50	20	A.A. Erhart
The Beach Store	06.03.1933	\$1	39	A.A. Erhart

*The entire collection with descriptions, as well as, obverse and reverse photographs can be found on the Newman Numismatic Portal's Image Collections titled *Pismo Beach (CA) City Hall Clam Shell Money*.

Date Differentiation and Signs of Backdating

During the fieldwork in Pismo Beach, a local historian suggested that the Pismo Beach merchants may have intentionally backdated their scrip currency. Evidence in the 19 pieces of Clam Shell Scrip from the Pismo Beach City Hall Collection, the 1933 San Luis Obispo Daily Telegram column and the 1959 Calcoin News article point towards differentiation in production dates and the date of issue inscribed on the Clam Shell Scrip. A differentiation between the date of production and the date inscribed on the Clam Shell Scrip is primarily associated with the day Pismo Beach merchants began adopting Clam Shell Scrip as a form of currency, March 6th, 1933. There are three possible methods of dating used by the Pismo Beach Merchants that account for this differentiation:

1. *Batch Dating:* During the adoption and initial release, Pismo Beach merchants dated their Clam Shell Scrip to a single “batch” date, rather than the date that each individual Clam Shell Scrip was produced. By utilizing batch dating, Pismo Beach merchants who began creating scrip currency on or just after March 6th, 1933 would date their Clam Shell Scrip to March 6th for the purpose of consistency. If a merchant chose to create additional currency it would be dated to the start of the new batch, not the previous batch.
2. *Target Dating:* By applying this method, Pismo Beach merchants dated all of their Clam Shell Scrip to a specific day, regardless of the date of production. California Market issued three unique pieces of Clam Shell Scrip all dated March 6th, 1933, however California Market does not appear as one of the original adopters of the scrip currency in the San Luis Obispo Daily Telegram column on March 8th, 1933. This suggests that they

may have chosen to date all their Clam Shell Scrip to March 6th, 1933 regardless of the day of production.

3. *Day of Production Dating:* Pismo Beach merchants dated their Clam Shell Scrip to the actual day of production. Leiter's Pharmacy issued four denominations of Clam Shell Scrip over the dates of March 6th, 8th, and 10th, with the \$1 denomination being issued on both March 6th and March 8th, 1933. This shows a progression of dates within the March 6th through March 13th bank holiday, suggesting each Clam Shell Scrip was dated on its day of production.

Further research into the possibility that the date of issue inscribed on Pismo Beach Clam Shell Scrip differs from the actual date of production has brought to the forefront three anomalies: 1) high serial numbers despite an early date of issue, 2) high volume produced on March 6th, 1933, 3) employed production on March 7th, despite limited Clam Shell Scrip.

A high serial number despite early date of issue, refers to Clam Shell Scrip that is inscribed with higher than average serial numbers given their date of issue. In Figure 3, The Beach Store \$1 denomination Clam Shell Scrip is dated March 6th, 1933, the same day the scrip currency was created.³⁸ However,

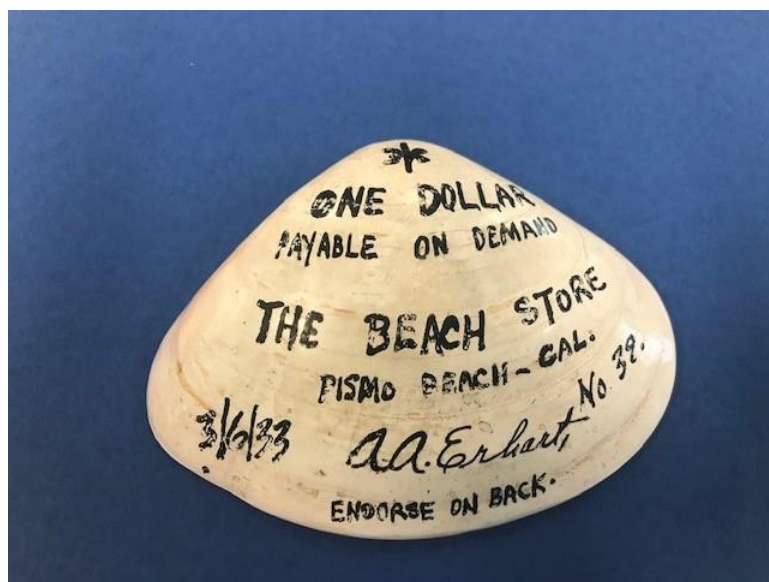


Figure 3 - Beach Store \$1, No.39 - Pismo Beach City Hall Collection

³⁸ Image courtesy of the Pismo Beach City Hall

the serial number inscribed is “No. 39”, indicating that Beach Store owner A. A. Erhart had issued a minimum of 39 pieces of Clam Shell Scrip. The March 6th, 1933 timeline laid out in the 1959 *Calcoin News* article traces four main events leading to the Clam Shell Scrip’s Creation: 1) William H. Bogue held a conversation with K. L. Phillips in which the idea of Clam Shell Scrip was first suggested, 2) Bogue created the first \$1 denomination Clam Shell Scrip with Harry H. Leiter, 3) Bogue presented the Clam Shell Scrip to Phillips, who placed it in his shop window, 4) the Clam Shell Scrip was sold to a customer, thereby inspiring Leiter to produce Clam Shell Scrip as an actual substitute to cash.³⁹ All of these events would have taken a significant portion of the day, therefore bringing into question how A. A. Erhart and four other merchants adopted the Clam Shell Scrip and issued it en-masse on the same day.

This brings into question the volume of Clam Shell Scrip supposedly produced on March 6th, 1933, despite William H. Bogue, K. L. Phillips and Harry H. Leiter having only created the scrip currency earlier that day. Out of 19 pieces of Clam Shell Scrip displayed in the Pismo Beach City Hall Collection, there are 11 unique pieces inscribed March 6th, 1933. Nine of these are also inscribed with serial numbers ranging from 1 to 39. An example is the \$1 denomination Clam Shell Scrip from Henderson’s Drug Store that is inscribed with serial number “No. 18”. (See Table 1) From this example, it can be posited that an additional 17 pieces preceded this Clam Shell Scrip for a total minimum of 18 pieces issued on March 6th, 1933. As there is no time of day mentioned in the 1959 *Calcoin News* article, we can only assume that William H. Bogue and K. L. Phillips’ conversation could have taken place any time during normal business hours and that production of Clam Shell Scrip could have continued until 12pm that evening. Following

³⁹ Ralph A. Mitchell and Charles V. Kappna, “United States Depression Scrip,” *Calcoin News* 13, no. 3 (1959): 65, accessed January 3, 2020. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/516388?page=7>

this logic, the merchants of Pismo Beach would have collectively issued a minimum of 118 pieces on March 6th, 1933. (See Table 2) This number is derived by summing the serial numbers of all nine unique pieces dated March 6th, 1933.

Table 2 – Serial numbers of the nine Clam Shell Scrip dated March 6th, 1933

Shell	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Sum:
Serial No.	4	8	12	14	18	1	20	39	2	118

This does not take into account the Clam Shell Scrip issued by Beach Camp nor the Chamber of Commerce, which accounts for a minimum of 2 pieces, as their Clam Shell Scrip bares no serial number to indicate how many pieces preceded those held in the City Hall’s collection.

Additionally, since the \$1 denominated Clam Shell Scrip from Leiter’s Pharmacy bares serial number “No. 1” it does not account for any additional Clam Shell Scrip issued with the same denomination on March 6th, 1933. However, using the physical evidence that remains, the 11 pieces of Clam Shell Scrip indicate that, for all production to occur on the same day as the inscribed serial number, at least 120 pieces would have been produced on March 6th, 1933.

As use of the Clam Shell Scrip spread, the 1959 Calcoin News article claims that the Pismo Beach merchants began outsourcing their production to unemployed citizens. The final sentence of the article describes how Harry H. Leiter decided to outsource his production and that “Starting on Monday, by noon of the next day he had four unemployed citizens busy polishing, ornamenting, numbering and dating clamshells.”⁴⁰ This would indicate that, while starting on Monday, March 6th, by Tuesday, March 7th Leiter had four unemployed citizens actively producing Clam Shell Scrip either for his own establishment or on behalf of other merchants.

⁴⁰ Ralph A. Mitchell and Charles V. Kappna, “United States Depression Scrip,” *Calcoin News* 13, no. 3 (1959): 65, accessed January 3, 2020. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/516388?page=7>

However, no remaining Clam Shell Scrip is inscribed with the date of March 7th, 1933. The 1959 Calcoin News article references only one Clam Shell Scrip dated March 7th, 1933 issued by K. L. Phillips through his establishment Phillips' (Tidewater) Associated Service Station.⁴¹ Therefore, if the 1959 Calcoin News article and its retelling in the 1992 Winning Ways are chronologically accurate, a substantial number of Clam Shell Scrip produced for Leiter's Pharmacy or other Pismo Beach merchants should have existed. This anomaly brings into question whether Leiter's employees were inscribing Clam Shell Scrip with a date of issue that differed from its date of production, March 7th, 1933.

Each of the three anomalies indicate a differentiation between the date of production and the date of issue. The high serial number and volume associated with Clam Shell Scrip inscribed with a March 6th, 1933 date of issue supports the local historian's theory that the Pismo Beach merchants backdated their scrip currency.

⁴¹ Ralph A. Mitchell and Charles V. Kappna, "United States Depression Scrip," *Calcoin News* 13, no. 3 (1959): 65, accessed January 3, 2020. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/516388?page=7>

5 The 80th Anniversary Series of 2013

A Return to Public Use

In the 21st century Clam Shell Scrip has seen a resurgence in public use as a currency in Pismo Beach, CA, through the aspirations of a local numismatist and several Pismo Beach merchants. In 2013, on the 80th anniversary of the original 1933 Clam Shell Scrip currency, a replica series using modern Pismo Beach Clams were produced and issued. The modern Pismo Beach merchants offered the replica Clam Shell Scrip to customers either following a purchase or available for purchase to patrons as memorabilia. The first two establishments to offer replica Clam Shell Scrip to customers were Girl's Restaurant, a casual dining restaurant, and Shell-ebration Beach House, a vacation rental. Another local merchant noticed the Clam Shell Scrip and, liking the idea, requested that a batch be made for his store, Games Exchange. The 80th Anniversary Series was enjoyed by locals and tourists who often kept the replica Clam Shell Scrip as memorabilia, rather than redeem it at a later date. The 80th Anniversary Series is still accepted by participating merchants and despite production ceasing in 2013, there is optimism for a new series of replica Clam Shell Scrip in the future.⁴²

Design and Production of the Series

The design and production of the 80th Anniversary Series followed a similar chronological process to the 1933 scrip currency. The series started with two prototype Clam Shell Scrip, one for Shell-ebration Beach House dated May 19th, 2013 and one for The Girl's Restaurant which

⁴² Joel Anderson, Interview with series creator by author, September 15, 2019.; Games Exchange Owner, interview by author, September 15, 2019.

had no date inscribed on it. Both of these prototypes were designed and issued by the Pismo Beach numismatist. As more merchants decided to issue the replica scrip currency, production was outsourced to a designer to meet the increased scale of production. The hired designer created three different designs for each participating merchant, which were issued en-masse to the public. Much like the 1933 Clam Shell Scrip, these designs were drawn by hand and would often include aesthetic touches; palm trees, birds in flight or a beach.⁴³

⁴³ Joel Anderson, Interview with series creator by author, September 15, 2019.; Games Exchange Owner, interview by author, September 15, 2019.

Table 3: The three merchants' Official Releases– Courtesy of Joel Anderson World Coins

	
Top Left: The Girl's Restaurant <i>Description:</i> \$5.00 Clam Shell Scrip issued as part of the official realease on an unspecified date. Signed by Sarah J.. Chapman <i>Serial Number:</i> No. 1007	
Bottom Middle: Shell-ebriation Beach House <i>Description:</i> \$5.00 Clam Shell Scrip issued as part of the offical release on May 31, 2013. Signed by Sarah J. Chapman <i>Serial Number:</i> No. 1007	
Top Right: Games Exchange <i>Description:</i> \$5.00 Clam Shell Scrip issued as part of the offical release on August 21, 2013. Signed by Tony Warino <i>Serial Number:</i> No. 2022	

Apart from the two prototypes and the three public Clam Shell Scrip releases for the Pismo Beach merchants, the 80th Anniversary Series had two additional releases in late 2013. The first was a second batch of Shell-ebriation Beach House Clam Shell Scrip with a denomination of \$5, offered for sale via mail-order. This issue garnered significant popularity with estimates of roughly 100 pieces sold, although no records remain as to the exact number. The second was a special edition Clam Shell Scrip for Shell-ebriation Beach House with a denomination of \$2.50. This special edition was created at the bequest of a private organization to distribute as a party

favor for the organization's holiday banquet. A total of 116 Clam Shell Scrip were produced for the event. The special edition was the last release of the 80th anniversary series, however, there is optimism regarding the creation of a new Clam Shell Scrip for Games Exchange. The series, if implemented, is planned to consist of Clam Shell Scrip with a \$20 denomination, offered as gift certificates for customers. Table 4 is an itemized record of the 2013 Clam Shell Scrip issued by the numismatist and merchants of Pismo Beach, known as the 80th Anniversary Series.⁴⁴

Table 4: 80th Anniversary Series – Courtesy of Joel Anderson World Coins (joelscoins.com)

Issuer	Type	Designer	Date (DD.MM.YYYY)	Serial Number	Denomination
Shell-ebration Beach House	Pattern	J. Anderson	19.05.2013	001	\$5.00
The Girl's Restaurant	Pattern	J. Anderson	##.##.2013	1001, 1002 and 1003	\$5.00
Shell-ebration Beach House	Official Release	Sarah Chapman	30.05.2013 & 1.06.2013	1001 – 1025	\$5.00
The Girl's Restaurant	Official Release	Sarah Chapman	No date on scrip	1004 – 1014	\$5.00
The Games Exchange	Official Release	Sarah Chapman	21.08.2013	2001 - 2022	\$5.00
Shell-ebration Beach House	2 nd Official Release	Sarah Chapman	##.##.2013	N/A ~100 issued	\$5.00
Shell-ebration Beach House	Special Edition	Sarah Chapman	##.##.2013	N/A ~116 issued	\$2.50

⁴⁴ Joel Anderson, Interview with series creator by author, September 15, 2019.; Games Exchange Owner, interview by author, September 15, 2019.

A Modern Perspective on the Clam Shell Scrip

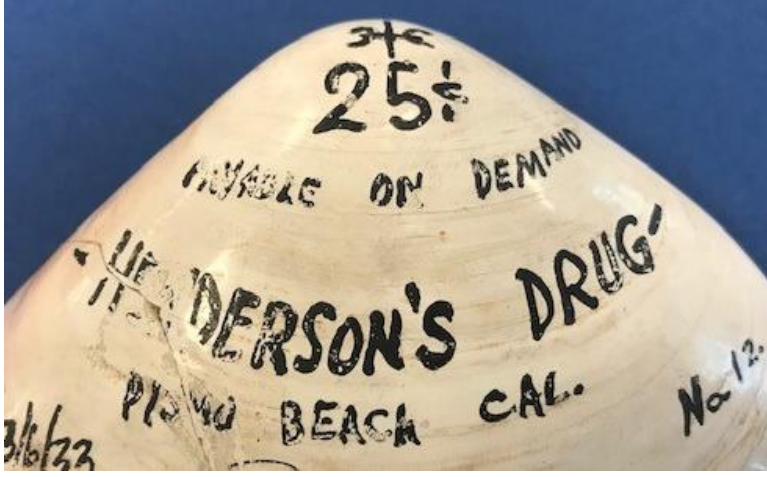
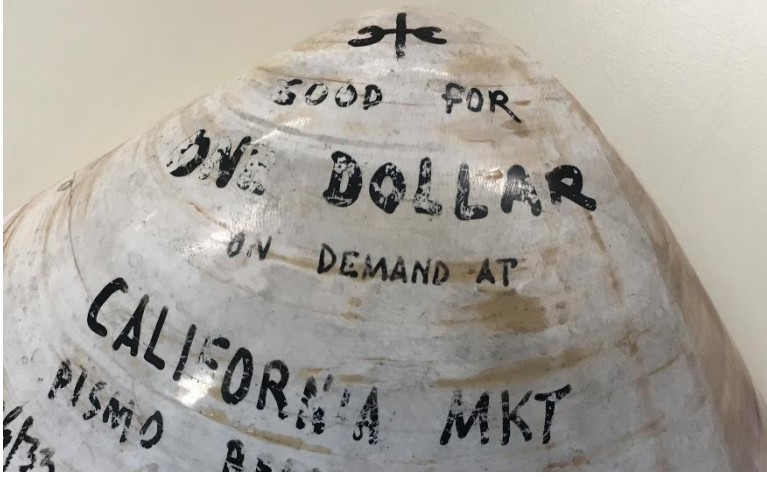
The 80th anniversary series of the Clam Shell Scrip provides a modern perspective into how the Clam Shell Scrip of 1933 may have been adopted. There are two aspects in which the creation and adoption 1933 and 2013 scrip currencies are comparable: 1) paths by which it spread to other merchants and the public, 2) interconnected design and production of the Clam Shell Scrip.

The 80th anniversary Clam Shell Scrip spread to Pismo Beach merchants through two primary paths; shared from friend to friend and observed by other merchants. The Girl's Restaurant was friend to friend, while the owner of Games Exchange decided to adopt the scrip currency after observing it in The Girl's Restaurant. Similarly, the 1959 Calcoin News article and the 1993 edition of Winning Ways, provides an account of how the 1933 Clam Shell Scrip initially followed the friend to friend path as Harry H. Leiter adopted the idea of his fellow merchants K. L. Phillips and William H. Bogue. As it progressed, it is likely that the 1933 Clam Shell Scrip spread to other merchants who observed their contemporaries adopting this unlikely form of currency as the 1933 Bank Holiday progressed. While there is no record of how the 1933 Clam Shell Scrip was accepted by the residents of Pismo Beach, the 80th Anniversary Series was perceived as a novelty and often collected as memorabilia. Pismo Beach residents appreciated the scrip currency's connection to local history, while tourists found it to be a unique souvenir. In the case of Games Exchange, many of the customers who purchased or received Clam Shell Scrip where from neighboring cities leading to the scrip currency's dissemination outside of Pismo Beach.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Joel Anderson, Interview with series creator by author, September 15, 2019.; Games Exchange Owner, interview by author, September 15, 2019.

The design and production of both the 1933 Clam Shell Scrip and the 2013 80th Anniversary Series were interconnected among merchants. The modern replica's design and production were limited to a single designer, employed by the numismatist. This meant all three Pismo Beach merchants relied on a single source for design and production of their Clam Shell Scrip, causing the aesthetics of the 80th Anniversary Series to have visible similarities. While there are no written records of collaboration between Pismo Beach merchants in 1933, there exists visible similarities in the Clam Shell Scrip to suggest interconnected design and production. Visible similarities can be seen between almost all 1933 Clam Shell Scrip currency. Additionally, the design for Wolverton Sign Company and Beach Camp's Clam Shell Scrip is identical, suggesting a single designer. A frequent similarity, found on 12 of the 19 pieces of Clam Shell Scrip in the Pismo Beach City Hall Collection, is a symbol akin to a Flor de Lis that appears on the Umbo, or hinge joint, of the Pismo Clam. Clam Shell Scrip issued by Henderson's Drug Store, The Beach Store and California Market bare strikingly similar Flor de Lis-esque designs. These establishments were owned by O. L. Henderson, A. A. Erhart, and C. F. Earman and William H Mouser respectively. Therefore, for the Flor de Lis-esque symbol to be intentionally duplicated on all three designs would require the collaboration of these four Pismo Beach merchants.

Table 5: Flor de Lis shape inscribed on Clam Shell Scrip – Pismo Beach City Hall Collection

	Henderson's Drug Store \$0.25, Issued March 8th, 1933 Serial Number: No.12 Issuer: O. L. Henderson
	The Beach Store \$0.50, Issued March 6th, 1933 Serial Number: No.20 Issuer: A. A. Erhart
	California Market \$1.00, Issued March 6th, 1933 Serial Number: No.4 Issuer: C. F. Earman and William H Mouser

A more apparent illustration of design and production collaboration in 1933 is the Clam Shell Scrip issued by F. W. Wolverton and Theodore Bernhoeft. These two merchants owned Wolverton Sign Company and Beach Camp, respectively, and both issued the only Clam Shell Scrip design to incorporate colour, red numbering traced in yellow and red lettering of the names “F.W. Wolverton Signs” and “Beach Camp”. (See Table 6) The positioning of dates, signature endorsements and text is identical and points to a singular designer. Given the appearance of these two pieces of scrip currency, it is evident the two Pismo Beach merchants worked in partnership on design, and likely, production of their respective Clam Shell Scrip. It appears that the Pismo Beach merchants of 1933 did not act individually, but instead banded together to design and produce their own scrip currency in response to the Bank Holiday of 1933.

Table 6: Wolverton Sign Company and Beach Camp – Pismo Beach City Hall Collection

	Beach Camp \$0.50, Issued March 6th, 1933 Serial Number: N/A Issuer: Theodore Bernhoeft
	F. W. Wolverton Signs \$20.00, Issued March 6th, 1933 Serial Number: No.2 Issuer: F. W. Wolverton

6 Conclusion

Conclusion for the Clam Shell Scrip

California's Clam Shell Scrip currency is one of the most fascinating scrip currencies to emerge from the Bank Holiday of 1933. The foundational material of the scrip currency, the clam shell, has an important history with the Southern California coastal Native American Chumash, who used it as a medium of exchange long before Franklin D. Roosevelt's Proclamation 2039 and the subsequent Bank Holiday of 1933. The modern-day narratives in the 1958 and 1959 Calcoin News article series "United States Depression Scrip" and the 1993 Winning Ways' article "California ClamShell Money" recounts how the Merchants of both Crescent City and Pismo Beach used their own ingenuity to create a solution for their cash strapped towns. The credibility of Crescent City's 1958 and 1993 narratives are supported by the known existence of Clam Shell Scrip through the 2012 Holabird-Kagin Americana auction. Likewise, the Pismo Beach's 1959 and 1993 narratives can be successfully confirmed by the remaining 19 pieces of Pismo Beach Clam Shell Scrip, the eyewitness accounts that have been preserved by regional museums and the reputations of the articles' authors.

While the fieldwork in Crescent City did not reveal new insight into the scrip currency through; oral history, new written records nor Clam Shell Scrip, it did provide confirmation of one primary source and the two historical narratives that remain. The fieldwork conducted in Pismo Beach allowed for the first digital recording of the Pismo Beach City Hall Collection and increases the number of documented 1933 Clam Shell Scrip four-fold. Now published online, this record is available to researchers, collectors and historians worldwide through the Newman Numismatic Portal (<https://nnp.wustl.edu/Library/ImageCollection/515406>). For this research

however, the newly recorded Clam Shell Scrip provides a substantial primary source and allows for new insight into its production and adoption, which has identified anomalies in serial numbers, volume and date of issue. Together these anomalies represent multiple signs that the Pismo Beach merchants backdated the 1933 Clam Shell Scrip.

This research also provides the first in depth documentation of the 80th Anniversary Clam Shell Scrip Series issued in 2013, tracing its origin and adoption throughout present day Pismo Beach. As a modern-day replica, it provided opportunity for comparison with the 1933 Clam Shell Scrip currency, which showed substantial evidence that the design and production of both series were interconnected among merchants. Therefore, despite its spontaneous creation, the Clam Shell Scrips of Crescent City and Pismo Beach show the ingenuity of an interconnected group of merchants whose solution to the 1933 Bank Holiday has left us with one of the most unique and fascinating examples of Depression Era scrip currency; the California Clam Shell Scrip.

Bibliography

- “Alutiiq Word of the Week Archive – Clothing – Dentalium Shell.” Alutiiq Museum. Accessed January 4, 2020. <https://alutiiqmuseum.org/word-of-the-week-archive/750-dentalium-shell-1>.
- Akin, Marjorie H., Bard, James C., and Akin, Kevin. *Numismatic Archaeology of North America: A Field Guide*. Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2016.
- Bommelyn, Loren Me’-lash-ne. “Who We Are – Tolowa Dee-ni’ Nation.” Tolowa Dee-ni’ Nation. Published March, 2011. <https://www.tolowa-nsn.gov/who-we-are/>.
- Bryk, Oliver. “Kerwin Louis Phillips (1892 – 1970) – Genealogy.” Last modified December 3, 2016. <https://www.geni.com/people/Kerwin-Phillips/6000000018856623004>.
- California Coastal Commission. *Beaches and Parks from Monterey to Venture*. California: University of California Press, 2007.
- “Clam Shells Replace Cash as Pismo Beach.” *San Luis Obispo Daily Telegram* (San Luis Obispo, California). Mar. 8, 1933.
- Dighe, Ranjit S. “Saving Private Capitalism: The U.S. Bank Holiday of 1933.” *Essays in Economics & Business History* 29 (2011). <http://www.ebhsoc.org/journal/index.php/journal/article/view/40/37>
- Drucker, Philip. “The Tolowa and Their Southwest Oregon Kin.” *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology* 36, no. 4 (1937): 240. Accessed January 4, 2020, <https://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/anthpubs/ucb/text/ucp036-005.pdf>.
- Federal Reserve History. “Banking Act of 1935.” The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. Last Modified November 22, 2013. https://www.federalreservehistory.org/essays/banking_act_of_1935.
- “‘Historic era’ nominees inducted into ANA Numismatic Hall of Fame.” *Canadian Coin News*, June 18, 2016. <https://canadiancoinnews.com/historic-era-nominees-inducted-into-ana-numismatic-hall-of-fame/>.
- Homren, Wayne. “Holabird-Kagin Americana Western States Token Auction March 2012.” *The E-Sylum* 15, no. 13 (2012): Article 16. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/periodical/14296>.
- Leonard Jr., Robert D. “California Clamshell Money.” *Winning Ways: Official Publication of Women in Numismatics* 2, No. 3 (1993). <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/514901?page=15>.

- Mitchell, Ralph A. and Kappan, Charles V. "United States Depression Scrip." *Calcoin News* 12, no. 6 (1958): 134-135. https://archive.org/details/calcoinnews12n0cali_t6w7/page/134
- Mitchell, Ralph A. and Kappna Charles V. "United States Depression Scrip." *Calcoin News* 13, no. 3 (1959). <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/516388?page=7>.
- Nestor, Sandy. *Indian Placenames in America, Volume 1*. North Carolina: McFarland, 2015
- Peters, Gerhard and Wooley, John T. "Proclamation 2039-Declaring Bank Holiday." The American Presidency Project. Accessed January 3, 2020, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/proclamation-2039-declaring-bank-holiday>
- Santa Yeiz Band of Chumash Indians. "Hisotry of the Chumash People." Accessed January 3, 2020. <https://www.santaynezhchumash.org/history.html>.
- Schubert, Chuck. "Harry H. Leiter (1905-1974) – Find A Grave Memorial." Last modified May 16, 2018. https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/189798203/harry-h_-leiter.
- Silber, William L. "Why Did FDR's Bank Holiday Succeed?." *Economic Policy Review* 15, no. 1 (July 2009). <https://www.newyorkfed.org/research/epr/09v15n1/0907silb.html>.
- The Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary. s.v. "scrip (n.)." Accessed January 3, 2020. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/scrip>.
- Woodward, Athur. "An Early Account of the Chumash." *The Masterkey* VIII, (July 1934): 119.